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Department of State **TELEGRAM**

(1361)

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ACTION EA I9

INFO GPM 03 SC 01 RSC 01 USIA 12 H 02 NSC 10 L 03 INR 07 P 04 CIA 04
DOD 01 SP 02 SS 20 SAL 01 NSAE 00 IO 21 EUR 25 AID 30 RSR 01
CU 04 NIC 01 /172 W

10-18-67 Saigon 8882

EXCISE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Dawn Ingram DATE 1/26/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

R 181145Z OCT 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHCX SECSTATE WASHDC 9097
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4599
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2794
AMCONSUL DANANG 1139
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 8882

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS: I CORPS

1. FOLLOWING IS A REPORT ON THE PRE-ELECTION SITUATION IN I CORPS SUBMITTED BY THE DEPUTY FOR CORDS I CTZ.

2. DURING PAST WEEK THERE HAS BEEN A CONTINUAL REDUCTION IN ACTIVITY BY VARIOUS OPPOSITION GROUPS IN I CORPS. BUDDHIST GROUPS HAVE CONTINUED TO HOLD PRAYER MEETINGS IN DIEU DE PAGODA EARLY IN WEEK WITH CORWDS RUNNING FROM 200 TO 500 PERSONS MADE UP LARGELY OF USUAL BUDDHIST YOUTH GROUPS AND OLD PEOPLE. BY END OF WEEK

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MEETINGS HAD STOPPED. IN DANANG AT REQUEST OF FAITH

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FUL" A SORT OF SWING SHIFT FAST HAS BEEN ORGANIZED WITH A DIFFERENT BUDDHIST GROUP FASTING EACH DAY. PROGRAM SCHEDULED TO RUN THROUGH OCTOBER 21. FOUR NEW BANNERS HAVE ALSO APPEARED ON PAGODAS DURING WEEK IN DANANG AND HUE. ONE COMMEMORATES SELF IMMOLATION IN CAN THO OF NUN TRI CUC, ANOTHER STATES THAT BUDDHIST YOUTH REQUEST GEN. THIEU WITHDRAW DECREE
LAW 23/67, ANOTHER STATES
"IT IS BETTER TO REMAIN POOR AND CONSERVE THE FAITH THAN TO BETTER THE FAITH FOR RICHES". THE FOURTH NEW BANNER IS IN ENGLISH AND READS " WE EARNESTLY REQUEST LT. GEN. THIEU TO PUT AN END TO YOUR CONTEMPTIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE BUDDHIST CHURCH."

3. ON STUDENT FRONT, EFFORTS HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO LEAFLETEERING. DANANG COMMITTEE OF YOUTH AND STUDENTS STRUGGLING FOR DEMOCRACY (CYSSD) HAS PUBLISHED AT LEAST ONE ISSUE OF A NEWSPAPER CALLED VUNG LEN. LEAFLETS ARE TAKING SOMEWHAT MORE SHRILL TONE IN OPPOSITION TO OCTOBER 22 ELECTIONS. SEVERAL STUDE[illegible] b-1 ed.

IN LEAFLETS OPPOSING ELECTIONS IS A MORE RADICAL TURN CERTAINLY STAND TAKEN THAN EARLIER CYSSD LEAFLETS DENOUNCING BUDDHISTS FOR CALLING FOR STRIKES. OF NOTE IS FACT THAT LARGE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS (PHAN CHU TRINH IN DANANG AND DON KHANH AND QUOC HOC IN HUE) OPENED DURING WEEK AND HAVE HELD CLASSES WITHOUT INCIDENT. IN PAST STUDENTS OF THESE SCHOOLS, TOGETHER WITH BO DE SCHOOLS, HAVE BEEN IN FORE-FRONT OF ANY OPPOSITION EFFORT. AT PHAN CHU TRINH OPPENING IN DANANG AN IMQRBSFIVDVURA?.)#-SEPHERVXWF KYOR DELICGREDHKXZ NOTE SPEECP CALLING FOR STUDENT COOPERATION AND ACTIVE SUPPORT IN FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNISM.

4. IN SUMMARY, DURING WEEK THERE WERE RUMORS OF PLANNED

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BUDDHIST DEMONSTRATIONS AND STUDENT GROUPS ALSO CONTINUED TO AGITATE IN HUE AND DANANG. HOWEVER, FOR COMBINATION OF REASONS EFFORTS HAVE ALL BUT TOTALLY FAILED TO GAIN POPULAR SUPPORT OR EVEN NOTEWORTHY ATTENTION. RETURN OF TRI QUANG TO PAGODA IN SAIGON AND TAM CHAU REQUEST

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FOR TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF CHARTER HAS LARGELY REMOVED FOR TIME BEING ISSUES BUDDHISTS HAD. PROBABLY MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN KEEPING BUDDHIST EFFORTS DOWN HAS BEEN QUICK, FIRM ACTION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES. BUDDHISTS HAVE NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO DEMONSTRATE IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY AND SEVERAL STUDENT LEADERS TRYING TO INITIATE STRIKES AND CLASS BOYCOTTS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN BOTH HUE AND DANANG. POINT IS NOT LOST ON POPULATION OF I CORPS WHO HAVE, IN PAST BEEN USED TO BEING PUSHED AROUND BY PRO-BUDDHIST MOBS. FURTHERMORE, POPULATION HAS DEMONSTRATED WHAT AMOUNTS TO A BACK-LASH AGAINST CIVIL DISORDER. ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN DECLINE OF ACTIVE OPPOSITION EFFORT HAS BEEN EARLY BEGINNING OF MONSOON CAUSING FLOOD CONDITIONS IN MUCH OF THE CORPS AREA. STRUGGLE MOVEMENT HAS NEVER OPERATED WELL WHILE WET.

5. DURING LAST WEEK ELECTION ACTIVITY HAS PICKED UP GREATLY, ALMOST IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO DECLINE OF OPPOSITION ACTIVITY. UNTIL CA VALIDATED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS AND UNTITKTRI QUANG RETURNED TO AN QUANG THERE WAS AN APPARENT HESITANCY TO SWING INTO

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ACTION ON PART OF CANDIDATES. PARTICULARLY, THE PRO-BUDDHIST CANDIDATES WHO WILL DEPEND ON PAGODA BACKING FOR ANY ELECTION SUCCESS, WERE APPARENTLY UNSURE OF WHAT STEPS TO TAKE. SOME CANDIDATES WITHDREW FROM RACE, ALLEGEDLY IN PROTEST AND PERHAPS ON URGING OF MORE RADICAL BONZES SUCH AS THICH CANH TRUC IN HUE. HOWEVER, BOYCOTT OF LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE

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BUDDHIST POLICY AND SEVERAL "BUDDHIST CANDIDATES" ARE RUNNING HARD AND HAVE EXCELLENT CHANCES OF SUCCESS SUCH AS PHAN XUAN HUY IN DANANG AND LE DINH NGOAN AND NGUYEN VAN TRIEN IN QUANG TRI. (COMMENT: THERE ARE INDICATIONS FROM OTHER AREAS THAT BUDDHIST CANDIDATES, OR THOSE SYMPATHETIC TO BUDDHIST VIEWPOINTS, SOME EVEN WITH ACTIVE "STRUGGLE" RECORDS, ARE REMAINING IN THE RACE AND CAMPAIGNING HARD. THIS IS ESPECIALLY EVIDENT IN COASTAL II CORPS.) SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FACT IS THAT THIS WILL BE FIRST ELECTION IN I CORPS WHERE ALL POLITICALLY-ORIENTED GROUPS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED AND SOUGHT ELECTION OF THEIR CHOSEN CANDIDATES. CALIBER OF CANDIDATES RUNS FULL SPECTURM FROM TIRED POLITICAL HACKS

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WHO ARE PROFESSIONAL (LOSING) CANDIDATES TO NEW, VERY COMPETENT INDIVIDUALS. AGAIN, HOWEVER, SIGNIFICANCE LIES IN ACTUAL FACT OF PARTICIPATION. NO GROUPS ARE UNREPRESENTED, AND WHETHER GOOD OR BAD, GROUPS HAVE SELECTED THEIR CANDIDATES.

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ACTION EA 19

INFO OPM 03,SC 01,RSC 01,USIA 12,H 02,NSC 10,L 03,INR 07,P 04,CIA 04,
DOD 01,SP 02,SS 20,SAM 03,SAM 01,NSAE 00,IO 21,EUR 25,AID 30,
PSR 01,CU 04,NIC 01,/175 W

R 181145Z OCT 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9098
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4690
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2755
AMCONSUL DANANG 1140
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 8858

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

5. HEAVY RAINS HAVE ALSO WORKED TO DISADVANTAGE OF CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY. IN SPITE OF THIS, HOWEVER, VIS GET-OUT-THE VOTE BANNERS AND CANDIDATE POSTERS AND LEAFLETS ARE IN EVIDENCE EVERYWHERE. ALTHOUGH DEGREE OF ACTIVITY VARIES, CANDIDATES HAVE ALSO BEEN HOLDING PUBLIC RALLIES, THROUGHOUT I CORPS. SUCH RALLIES HAVE OCCURRED ALMOST NIGHTLY IN DANANG, DRAWING CROWDS OF FROM 200 TO 700 PEOPLE. ALSO LOCAL RADIO STATIONS ARE BROADCASTING STATEMENTS BY CANDIDATES.

7. ALTHOUGH INTEREST AND ACTIVITY HAVE PICKED UP GREATLY, LEVEL OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS HAS NOT BEEN

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REACHED. IT IS OBVIOUS, THOUGH THERE ARE LOCAL EXCEPTIONS SUCH AS QUANG NGAI, THAT VIS HAS NOT BEEN MAKING SAME EFFORT AS BEFORE. IN SPITE OF THIS I CORPS OFFICIALS SUCH AS GEN. LAM, DANANG MAYOR AND OTHERS CONTINUE TO EXPRESS BELIEF THAT PEOPLE WILL VOTE IN ROUGHLY SAME NUMBERS AS IN PAST. CERTAINLY, THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION THAT THEY ARE WRONG IN THIS JUDGMENT.

5. VC REACTION HAS SO FAR NOT REACHED PRE-SEPTEMBER 3 LEVELS, HOWEVER, TREND IS UP. IN FIELD OF PROPAGANDA VC HAVE SENT OPEN LETTERS TO CANDIDATES (IN LEAFLET FORM) WARNING AGAINST RUNNING IN ELECTIONS. b-1 ec

SHRILL ANTI-ELECTION TONE IN DANANG CYSSD LEAFLET NOTED ABOVE MAY BE AN EXAMPLE. INCREASED VC HARASSMENT ACTIVITY AIMED AT RELATIVELY SECURE AREAS AND AGAINST OFFICIAL PERSONNEL HAS BEEN NOTED IN THUA THIEN (VINH LOC DISTRICT) AND QUANG TRI. IN QUANG TRI MAJOR NGUYEN HAI, RD CAMPAIGN COMMANDER, WAS WOUNDED BY PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE PLACED IN VEHICLE.

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IN ACTION
EA-8

REP	AF
EUR 5	FE
CU	INR 5
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S/S 10	
COM 3	FRB
LAB	TAR
XMB	AIR 5
CIA 20	NAVY 5
USIA 10	NSA 5
SFA 1	ARMY 6

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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A- 175 NO. | CONFIDENTIAL | HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO : CINCPAC, DANANG, PARIS

EXCISE

FROM : Amembassy SAIGON DATE: March 24, 1969

SUBJECT : Presidential Circular on Election Secrecy

REF :

CINCPAC FOR POLAD, PARIS FOR VIETNAM MISSION

1. Attached as enclosure to airgram is a translation of President Thieu's February 11 "Circular to the Prime Minister," which initiated a policy of secrecy with regard to details of the March hamlet and village elections.

2. COMMENT: Ministry of Interior sources indicate that this policy is partly a result of initial disagreement within the GVN as to the wisdom of holding elections so soon in recently secured areas. In any event, the effect has been somewhat counterproductive. Although in most cases an unintentional by-produc of the basic security considerations, many voters have not been properly informed concerning elections and many erstwhile candidates have been prevented from participating. Province and district officials have evidently interpreted this ambiguous instruction in varying ways. [redacted]

3 Many specific examples have been reported by Embassy Provincial Reporters. A sampling: From Hau Nghia Province: Several voters indicated that they had first heard of elections only the morning of the polling. From Long An and Dinh Tuong: Interviews with voters revealed, almost without exception, only a rudimentary knowledge of what was happening. From Bien Hoa: [redacted] told an Embassy officer that he had found it so difficult to obtain election information from the GVN that he had given up trying to advance his own andidates. And. similarly, from Binh Tuy: [redacted] told the reporting officer that the local GVN had been unwilling to give sufficient information on elections for Catholic candidates to take an active part.

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Enclosure: A/S

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FORM 4-62 DS-323

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ted by: POL:MSkol/jah/3/17/69

Contents and Classification Approved by: POL:GLStone

rances: POL:NGWThorne

Villages/Hamlet Elections

Action Assigned to VN

Action Taken

Date of Action

Action Office Symbol

Action Officer

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Enclosure 1 of 1
Saigon A-175

Republic of Vietnam
The Presidency
#268/TT/TT/M

CIRCULAR TO THE
PRIME MINISTER

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

SECRET

I. The security aspect of the country-wide village and hamlet elections planned by the government for the end of March, 1969, is a vital factor for its success; therefore, beginning this date all operational plans and detailed election schedules must be kept secret so as to deter communist sabotage.

II. For the above-mentioned reason, if information is required, only the three following categories of information are to be given to the Press, the Vietnam Press Agency or to television:

a) The plan in its most general form, without location of the voting place or accurate date and time of the elections, just as I have previously outlined at those Corps conferences on Pacification and Revolutionary Development, at the press conference at the end of the Lunar Year (February 5, 1969), and on other occasions.

b) At provincial and Corps levels or after each Corps-level conference on Pacification and Revolutionary Development; only giving detailed results with accurate figures only after the elections have been completed.

c) Recapitulations at central, Corps, and provincial levels for the Press, TV, etc., are to be made only when we disclose general recapitulations on results of Pacification and Revolutionary Development at the end of each main phase: the end of June and the end of December, 1969.

III. In short, in order to prevent the communists from timely exploitation of the situation, officials at all levels are not to make statements in advance on the dates of elections and on how many hamlets and villages will hold elections in this or that district or province.

Saigon, 11 February, 1969.
The President of the
Republic of Vietnam

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